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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JUNE 09, 2009

Summary: Reports of continued clashes between the armed villagers and Taliban in Upper Dir district that resulted in killing of seven more militants dominated headlines in all major newspapers on Tuesday. The ongoing spate of political violence in Karachi continued to garner media coverage. Newspapers front-paged reports that "eight more people fell victim to target killing in the metropolis." Army Chief General Kayani's statement directing "preparation of a workable plan for safe and secure return of the IDPs to their homes" received prominent display. The prestigious English daily, "Dawn," highlighted a report that "militants have blown up a college, a high school and two bridges in Buner district."

Most major dailies ran editorials on the recent violent clashes between two rival factions of MQM (Muttahida Qaumi Movement) in Karachi. However, some papers editorialized the villagers' revenge for a deadly mosque bombing. The centrist national English daily "The News" observed that the "rising up of people against the Taliban could be an important development in this final leg of the struggle against them." The Lahore-based liberal daily, "Daily Times," noted that the "consequences of last week's suicide-bombing of mosque in Upper Dir has unfolded in the shape of local retaliation." Commenting on some disagreement on military offensive, the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" advised that the "opposition should come forward and convince the miscreants for talks. If they can't do that then let the Pakistan Army do its job." End Summary.

News Stories

"Lashkar Tightens Noose Around Taliban; 7 More Killed As Clashes Continue In Dir Upper; Gen. Athar Urges People to Rise Up Against Militants" "The News" (06/09)

"Seven more militants were killed and two Lashkar men injured, one of them seriously, during clashes between the Taliban and armed villagers in Doog Darra area of Dir Upper district on Monday. Locals said the encircled militants started putting up resistance on Monday and were using heavy weapons against the Lashkar. But all the supply lines and escape routes have been closed by the armed villagers as they have been surrounded by all sides. The action prompted the top military spokesman to urge Pakistanis to rise up against the militants wherever they are in the country."

"Karachi Remains In Grip Of Violence; 8 Dead" "Dawn" (06/09)

"At least eight more people, including four workers of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement-Haqiqi and an activist of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, were killed on Monday in the ongoing spate of political violence that has gripped the city for the past three days."

"Kayani Wants Plan Kayani Return Of For Safe IDPs" "Dawn" (06/09)

"Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani has ordered preparation of a workable plan for safe and secure return of the internally displaced persons to their homes. The Army Chief, who visited Mingora and other areas of Swat along with Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Rao Qamar Suleyman on Monday, directed the General Officer Commanding to focus on return of IDPs in peace and security and prepare a contingency plan for the post-operational stage."

"Taliban Blow Up Buner Bridges, School, College" "Dawn" (06/09)

"Militants have reportedly blown up a government college, a government high school and two bridges in Buner district on Monday. Local people said militants were making a last-ditch attempt to halt the advance of troops by blocking roads and blowing up bridges."

"Government fully Backing Lashkars: Iftikhar" "The Nation" (06/09)

"NWFP Information Minister Mian Iftikhar Hussain said on Monday that both the government and the security forces were extending full support to the local Lashkars against the militants in Dir and other restive parts of Malakand Division."

"Taliban Take 100 TNSM Men Hostage" "Daily Times" (06/09)

"The Taliban have taken 100 members of the Tehrik Nifaz Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) hostage including the local chief from Mamond area of Bajaur, a private TV channel reported on Monday. The channel said that differences between the Taliban and the TNSM had intensified, while on the other hand a group of Taliban had refused to fight the military."

"TTP Chief Asked To Renounce Violence" "The News" (06/09)

"Malik Turkistan Bhattani, an eminent commander of late Abdullah Mahsud's group, has warned tribal elders to refrain from extending any support to the banned Baitullah Mahsud-led Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which, he said, was involved in brutal activities in the region. He was speaking at a Mahsud tribal Jirga in Tank on Monday."

"Senators Lambaste Taliban For Defaming Islam" "The Nation" (06/09)

"Senators on Monday continued lambasting Taliban for defaming Islam and asked the government to unearth those foreign elements which were sponsoring militants in tribal territories."

"IDPs Show Antipathy Towards Taliban" "Dawn" (06/09)

"As world's humanitarian concern for Pakistan's internally displaced persons grows, most IDPs express deep 'antipathy towards Taliban' but they also questioned the government's will to eliminate the militants, a U.S. magazine reported on Monday."

"Holbrooke Pays Quiet Gulf Visit to 'Raise Funds For IDPs'" "Dawn" (06/09)

"U.S. Special Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke is quietly touring the Gulf countries, raising funds for Pakistan to help it look after millions of people displaced because of its campaign against militants, according to diplomats."

"CJ Iftikhar Met Holbrooke On FO Advice" "The News" (06/09)

"The meeting of U.S. Special Envoy on Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke with Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry was held following advice of the foreign office to the Supreme Court's registrar. While the meeting led to many tongues wagging, with some drawing their own conclusions and raising questions that in cases stretch out to the limits of conspiracy theories, it was neither a one-on-one meeting between the two nor anything bypassing the government's foreign ministry."

"Zardari For Unconditional Talks With India" "Dawn" (06/09)

"President Asif Ali Zardari urged India on Monday to resume the process of composite dialogue 'unconditionally' to jointly address common problems, including terrorism. Violence and militancy were no solution to political problems, the President said during a meeting with Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, the Executive Director of Kashmir Center in Washington."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Proactive Action," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/09)

"In Dir, villagers, angered by the suicide bombing at a mosque that killed 33 people, have laid siege to Taliban strongholds and killed 13 militants. The clashes are evidence of growing hatred for the Taliban and the havoc they have created.... The rising up of people against the Taliban could be an important development in this final leg of the struggle against them.... They need to be encouraged as a means to challenge the militants and isolate them from people who they have, in the past, claimed to represent."

"Dir Villagers Against Taliban," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (06/09)

"The consequence of last week's suicide-bombing of a mosque in Upper Dir has unfolded in the shape of local retaliation.... There are three reasons for the turning of the popular tide. One is the breakdown of the Swat accord with Maulana Sufi Muhammad and the other is the national consensus against the actions of the Taliban and in favor of military operations. The third of course is the transformation of the media from a clearly pro-Taliban opinion factory to a balanced 'national' comment that tells the suffering people in the tribal areas in very clear terms that the Taliban are morally and legally wrong in what they are doing."

"Swat: Opposition Leaders Should Come Forward For Political Solution," an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (06/09)

"Many prominent opposition leaders have demanded a halt to military operation in Swat and asked for a political solution of the issue.... The opposition leaders have also asked America to leave the region, saying that America is the cause of all the lawlessness.... Opposition should come forward and convince the miscreants for talks. If they can't do that then let the Pakistan Army do its job."

"Swat Revived," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/09)

"Pakistan has never fought a war like the one it fights now, nor had to plan for a post-war regeneration on this scale.... Already there are reports of residents discussing how to revive the tourism industry in Kalam.... Tourism may be the easier nut to crack - putting farms back on their feet and replacing lost livestock will be much harder.... Difficult it may be but not impossible, and the deep well of social capital within of Swati communities will help to sustain the process of post-war regeneration. But social capital is not measured in hard cash - and hard cash they need. Swat presented an overarching threat - it could again - but it may also be an unparalleled opportunity for the government and the people to remake the social contract."

"Valiant Tribals Rise Against Militants," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (06/09)

"After having been driven out of the main cities and towns of Malakand, the militants are on the run and desperate to find safe havens in the far-flung and inaccessible mountainous areas of Malakand. They used the suicide bomber to terrorize the people of Hayagay Sharqi but unlike other areas, the locals drawing inspirations and strength from the ongoing operation of the security

forces in the neighboring areas decided to stand up and punish them which is a good omen as terrorism can only be defeated with the power of the people."

"Where Is Good Governance?," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (06/09)

"Target killing once again continues in the country's largest city and industrial hub.... It is worth noting that following the Swat and Malakand operation the Karachi security was in a state of high alert with police and Rangers patrolling the city. Such incidents in the presence of security personnel are a question mark for the rulers.... Karachi is confronted with grave law and order
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